

The Divinity of Christ Asserted.

N^o 15

A
SERMON

Preach'd before the

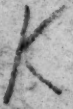
QUEEN,

AT

St. JAMES's

ON

Christmas Day, 1702.

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD 
Isabel
WILLIAM Lord Bishop of Oxon.

Published by Her Majesties Especial Command.

LONDON, 

Printed by Tho. Warren for Thomas Bennet, at the
Half-Moon in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1702.

The Dignity of Christ Agreed

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i Epist. of St. *John* Chap. III. v. 8. latter part.

*For this purpose the Son of God was
manifested, that he might destroy the
Works of the Devil.*

SINCE it is our Unhappiness to live in an Age, wherein the title of the *Son of God* in the highest and properest Notion of it is denyed our Lord, in the bold Theories of some, and the great Purpose of his coming into the World contradicted, by the unsuitable Practice of more that call themselves Christians; it is but a piece of Justice to this Day, whereon we commemorate his Nativity, to vindicate the Glory of his eternal God-head; against the Blasphemings of those, and his Religion from being any way accessary to the looseness and profaneness of these.

Indeed these are neither of them new Affronts to our Saviour, for quickly after he had taken our

Nature upon him, there were those that would have robbed him of his own: the *Mystery of Iniquity* began to work even in the Apostles Days, in Opposition to the great *Mystery of Godliness*, God manifest in the *Flesh*; and in that, and after Ages there arose up perverse Men, that denyed the Divinity of the Lord that bought them, asserting him to be but meer Man, that there was a time when he was not, and that he had no Being till he was born of the Virgin Mary.

We must not deny our Adversaries the great Names of *Ebion*, and *Artemon*, *Paulus Samosetanus*, *Arius*, *Photinus*, and others whom they copy after, though at the same time I must say, we have little reason to envy them, or they to be proud of them, if the Sense of the **Catholick Church** touching those Men and their Opinions may be regarded; as it appears not only in the Writings of particular Bishops and great Men, but from their Publick Acts, when met in Synods and Councils; notwithstanding which Determinations, these wretched Opinions have been propagated in our Kingdom, and Language: It is some time since the Enemy began to sow his Tares in the dark, and the Factors for Socinianism endeavoured privately as they could find Opportunity, to instill their Poysonous Errors, under all the artful disguises with which they could palliate them, corrupting young Students in their first setting out, possessing them that a Study was very imperfect till furnish'd with a set of the *Fra- tres*: but the Pestilence at last walk'd barefaced, and at Noon-Day, the dreadful Blasphemies have been publicly asserted and vindicated in Swarms of Pamphlets written in our own Tongue, for the
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more general spreading of the Contagion.

And as there was an early Corruption of Doctrine among some pretended Christians, so it must be acknowledged there was an early defection from the Rules relating to Practice prescribed by our Holy Religion, in the Lives of some of the Professors of it: even of those whom the Blessed Institutor of it himself chose out for his more immediate Attendants, one was a Devil; and in the Churches founded by the Apostles, there were disorderly Walkers; St. Paul complains pathetically, that there were *many that walkt so, whose Belly was their God, who gloried in their Shame, who minded Earthly things,* and the ill Effects of such Practises, not only to themselves that were guilty of them, but to Christ and his Religion; he could not express without Tears, *I tell you says he weeping, they are Enemies to the Cross of Christ.*

The great Argument used by the subtillest of those that disputed against the Christian Religion, was the unconformable practise of many that had taken that Holy profession upon them, this is urged by *Celsus, Porphyry, Julian, &c.* Indeed the argument is not conclusive, that if Christ had taught a holy Religion, his followers would have led more holy lives; This is not a just consequence, because some that call themselves Christians live very loosely and vitiously, therefore the Religion they profess is not a pure and Holy institution, yet this has often been pleaded and succeeded too unhappily, to the Scandal and Reproach of those within the pale of the Christian Church, and to the hardning those without, in their prejudices, and aversions to it, and keeping them at a distance from

it, and however illogical the inference may be, I fear we of this Age have the least reason of any since the first planting of Christianity to deny the premises, who cannot but see such a general dissolution of Manners among almost all sorts of Men, an open and avowed contempt of all that is Sacred, the most daring provocations of God by profaning, or despising every thing whereon his Name is called, his House, and Day, his Ministers and Ordinances; most crying injustices against others by oppressing and defrauding, and most beastly abuses of themselves by intemperance and incontinence; but complaints upon either of these heads will signify little, unless to shew the reason, or indeed necessity that there is at such a time as this, to assert the Divinity of our Lords Person, and the Holiness of his Religion, which I shall do by considering the two general parts of my Text, the manifestation of the Son of God, and the end of that Manifestation.

In the first general which is all I shall speak to at this time, are two particulars to be considered.

I. The Stile or Character of our Saviour, *the Son of God*. And

II. His Manifestation.

I shall endeavour to assert our Lords divinity from his Stile or Character, which is the first particular, and which I shall chiefly insist upon, tho' I shall likewise briefly consider his manifestation, which is the second, so far as may be useful either to the farther clearing of what I shall advance in the first, or to lay a Foundation for that Practical application with which I intend to conclude the whole.

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1. I am to consider our Saviour's Stile or Character in my Text *the Son of God*, and here I shall enquire in what Sence and Notion he is so.

That it is our Saviour who is here spoken off, I take for granted, nor is it denied by the *Socinians* that the Stile of the *Son of God* doth belong to him in several respects: the *Racov. Catech.* owns it in four; as he was begotten by the Holy-Ghost, produced besides the ordinary way of Generation, without a humane Father, and by the immediate power of God; as he was separated and sent into the World, to perform the Offices of the *Messiah*: as he was raised from the Dead to Immortality; and lastly, as he is appointed Heir of all things: and this is truth, in these senses the Scriptures do call him the Son of God: but it is not the whole truth, for there is another and higher Notion in which he is so, for two Reasons: 1. Because he was the Son of God, before that relation in any of those senses could take place. 2. Because he is the Son of God in such a sense as none of those can account for.

1. He was the Son of God before that relation in any of the senses and notions of it abovementioned could take place, and for the proof of this, omitting many other places, I shall produce only the first Chap. of the *Heb.* where says that holy Penman, *God who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in times past to the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last Days spoken unto us by his Son, by whom (i. e. by which Son) he made the World, which Son he calls, in the next verse, the Brightness of his Fathers Glory, and the express Image of his person, and then from the 4th Verse to the end of the Chap. he shews*

shews the excellency of that Son above the Angels, from the much higher Names and Characters which are given in Scripture to him, than are given to the Angels: *for unto which of the Angels said he at any time thou art my Son, — and again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son: v. 5. and of the Angels he saith, who maketh his Angels Spirits, and his Ministers a Flame of Fire, v. 7. but unto the Son he saith, thy Throne O God is for ever, v. 8. and thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the Foundation of the Earth, and the Heavens are the work of thine Hands, they shall perish, but thou remainest, and they all shall wax Old as doth a Garment, and as a Vesture shalt thou fold them up and they shall be changed, but thou art the same, and thy Tears shall not fail — v. 10, 11, 12.* Upon all which I observe, that the Son of God is He, by whom God made the World, and that we might not be at a loss, what World the Apostle meant, or what he understood by the making of it, or what he intended by the preposition *διὰ* which we render by, (*by whom he made, &c.*) he has given us a plain explication of the 2. v. in the 10. where he expounds the Worlds by the Heaven and the Earth, that Heaven and Earth, which as *Moses* writes were made in the beginning, that Heaven and Earth which are subject to Mutation and Decay, and at last shall be destroyed, which cannot be meant or be true of the new Creation but of the old. Then for the making of them he explains it to be such a making as implies the beginning and perfecting of them, he laid the Foundation, and they are the work of his Hands, lastly for the force of the preposition, that that which is rendred (and truly) *by him*, might not be misunderstood

derstood to signify either finally for him, or by him only instrumentally, but as by a principal and efficient cause, he applies those words of the Psalmist immediately to him, *thou Lord hast laid the Foundation and they are the work of thy Hands*, from whence it is evident that the Son of God made the World, and consequently was before the World was made, in as much as the Maker must be before the thing he makes, and then it will follow that he was before any of the aforementioned relations could take place, because the very first of them commenced not till several thousand years after the World was made: the first is founded in his Mysterious Conception and Birth, the rest are later, his Office as the Messiah he entered not upon, till several years after, his Resurrection was not till after his Death, and his exaltation to the right Hand of God in Heaven, was after his Resurrection: if therefore he was the Son of God before the World was made, he must be so in some other notion, than those which commenced not till so many thousand Years after.

2. He is the Son of God in such a *sence* as none of those can account for: for he is his *Only Son*, he is frequently Stiled in the Bible *the only begotten of God*, and *the only begotten of the Father*, and surely those expressions must exclude all others from being Sons in the same sence that he is: But can any of the above named notions account for this? Can he be said to be the only Son of God, because he was produced beside the ordinary way of generation, without a humane Father by the immediate power of God, when *Adam* also was produced without any humane Father by the immediate

power of the Almighty, and is for that reason in the third Chap. of *St. Luke* called *the Son of God*?

Can he be said to be the only Son of God because separated and set apart to his Offices? To his Office of Prophet when *Jeremiah* was separated, or set apart from the Womb to be a Prophet to the Nations? To the Office of Priest when *Aaron* and his Sons were hallowed or set apart to minister to the Lord in the Priests Office? To the office of King when Earthly Kings and Rulers are by reason of their Office and Authority derived from God, expressly called the Sons of God? *Psalms 82*.

Can he be said to be the only Son of God because raised by him from the Dead to Immortality? when 'tis as certain that God will raise our Bodies, as 'tis, that he has raised his; He indeed is the first fruits, the first begotten, the first born from the Dead: but surely the first born Son cannot be said to be the only Son if he has Brothers: and *St. Paul* makes his Resurrection so necessary an Argument of ours, that he concludes in *1 Cor. 15. 16.* that *if the Dead rise not, then is not Christ rais'd*: and he tells the *Philipians, Phil. 3. 21.* that our raised Bodies shall be made conformable to his, *for he shall change our vile Bodies that they may be fashioned like to his Glorious Body*: and this Resurrection of our Bodies, which he expresses by the redemption of them (the redemption from the Grave and Death) he calls a *υιοθετιζ*, or an Adoption, into the number of the Sons of God, in *Rom. 8. 23.* the Apostle saith, *We groan within our selves, waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Resurrection or Redemption of our Bodies.*

Lastly, Can he be said to be the only Son of God by Virtue of his Inheritance, when all Gods adopt-

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ed Children may plead a title to Sonship upon that account? So says the Apostle in the last mentioned Chap. v. 15, *&c. we have received the Spirit of Adoption whereby we cry Abba Father, the Spirit it self bearing witness with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God, and if Children then Heirs, Heirs of God and joynt Heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified together.*

Since then others in all these fences may plead a title to Sonship besides (tho' not so eminently as) Christ, 'tis evident that none of these can account for his being the *only Son*, and since 'tis certain he is the *only Son*, he must be the *Son of God* in some other Notion than those before named. And that is as he was begotten of his Father, by a true and real Generation.

In speaking to which I shall be sure to keep the Scriptures in my Eye, which though they are very plain that it is so, are but sparing in telling us how it is; all that we can collect from them, as to the manner, is little more than a negative sort of knowledge, informing rather what it is not than what it is: but I am content not to be wise above what is written, and shall always think that enough for me to know which God hath thought enough for him to reveal: To beget a Son in the proper notion of it, is to produce another of the same substance, and in the likeness of the Father: Now to apply this to the Generation of the *Son of God*, let us consider some accounts that the Scripture gives us of the nature and properties of God, and then do it in a Manner agreeable to his nature, and prescinding from all such Weaknesses as are repugnant to his infinite Perfections.

The Scriptures are very clear that God is a Spirit, that he is one God, and that he is from everlasting to everlasting, the Generation therefore of the Son of God cannot be as in humane Generations a communication of a part of the substance of the Father to him, because God being a Spirit has no parts and is incapable of division; it cannot be such a communication of the divine Nature as to make two God's; as when a Man begets a Son they are two Men, because *the Lord our God is one Lord and to us there is but one God*: it cannot be a production in time, because whatever being is produced in time, there was a time when that being was not, but this cannot be said of God, and the Son is God, as we shall see from Scripture by and by.

Again; the same Scripture makes a distinction between Father and Son, in so much that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, it tells us of *three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit*; that the Son, or *the word was with God* as well as God, Nay in that remarkable place in the tenth, St. John 30. where Christ asserts the Unity of their Nature, St. *Athenasius* observes from the number of the Verb, that he makes a distinction of Persons, he does not say, saith he, I and my Father, *ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατήρ* but *ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ υἱός*, not am one but are one, importing two Persons in one nature.

Further the Scriptures give a priority to the Father, not indeed of time, for then the Son would not be God, but of order, and in respect of the communication of the Godhead, in as much as the Godhead was communicated not from the Son to the Father, but from the Father to the Son; hence the Father is said to be *greater than the Son, and to have life in himself,*

himself; and that *it is given from him to the Son to have Life in himself*, and this observation by the way answers all the objections the *Socinians* draw from those Scriptures, which speak of the subordination of the Son to the Father, against the divinity of the Son. The sum then that we gather from the Scripture, touching the mysterious Generation of the Son of God is this, that the divine nature was from all eternity communicated to him from the Father without multiplication of the Godhead, without division of the substance, without confusion of Persons, with a subordination of the second to the first, in regard not of time but of communication; by which generation he has the same essence with the Father, is God of God, God as he is, I shall farther shew from Scripture.

And here first let us see what he says of himself, for tho' *he does bare record of himself his record is true*; we may reasonably suppose that he who chose to appear in so poor a condition, and live in such mean circumstances in the World, who affected not any thing that was great, but industriously avoided all appearance of it; whose Doctrine was humility, and whose Life humility, who both Preach'd and practised it in a most eminent degree, who bid his followers *learn of him*, who was *meek and lowly in Heart*, such a one certainly would not only not assume any high Character, which did not belong to him, but be very careful not to give occasion to any to think that he did, and very solicitous to undeceive them if they did mistake him: But what course did he take to rectify the mistake of the *Jews*, if it were one, who in the fifth of *St. John* concluded from his calling God his Father, that he *made himself equal with God*

God, v. 18? why truly he was so far from doing any thing like it, that he answers them by asserting an equal power with the Father of doing all things, and claiming an equal share with the Father of honour from all Men.

In another Conference with the *Jews* in the 10. Chap. of *St. John*, when he had declared that *he and his Father were one*, they immediately took up Stones to Stone him, and charged him with Blasphemy for that he *being but a Man made himself God*. Now certainly here was the time for him to have set them right, if they had mistaken his meaning, and there were many Obligations upon him to have done it: It was what he ow'd to himself, to the vindication of his Reputation, and safety of his Person, to clear one from so foul an Imputation, as the speaking of Blasphemy, and to secure the other from the furious attempts of those Zealots: It was what he owed to these poor *Jews*, not to let them go away with so wrong a notion of him, and which had given them such prejudices against him: And what does he say to clear this Matter? Does he deny the Charge, and tell them ye mistake my Meaning, I did not intend that I and my Father are one in Nature, but only in consent and agreement? No, but he justifies what he said and appeals to the works he had done to prove their Unity of essence which he had before asserted, and which he repeats again, that *he was in the Father and the Father in him*, by which Expressions the Greek Fathers, who should very well understand the import of the phrase, say Christ shewed *τὴν ταυτότητα τῆς θεότητος, καὶ τῆς οὐσίας ἐνότητά* the identity or sameness of the Deity, and Unity of the substance, and

and so the *Jews* undoubtedly understood it, who were so little satisfied, that they sought again to take him. Unless then we will charge our Saviour with want of Humility, Prudence, Charity, and Truth; with pride beyond that of *Lucifer*, in affecting an equality with God when he was but meer Man, with being unjustifiably regardless of his Credit and Life, with cruelly throwing a stumbling Block in the way of those whom he pretended to convince, and profelyte; and upon the whole dealing very insincerely with them, we must own him to be God: and so other Scriptures witness That. Particularly, *St. John* 20. 28. where *Thomas* cries out, not by way of admiration, but as the whole context plainly shews, by way of confession of his Faith in Him, *my Lord and my God*, and *Rom.* 9. 5. where *St. Paul* calls him, who according to the flesh, or in respect of his humane Nature descended from the Patriarchs, in regard of his divine Nature, *God blessed for ever, the Fathers of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all God blessed for evermore*; the Title by which the one God was known and called among the *Jews*.

And not to multiply more places, the same *St. Paul*, in his speech to the Bishops of *Asia*, whom he had convened at *Miletus* in xx Acts, charges them to feed the Church of God which he (i. e. God) had purchased with his own Blood: the word *God* is allowed in this place to signifie the one supreme God, and 'tis acknowledged that he that purchased his Church with his own Blood is that God: but then 'tis said, this may be applyed to God the Father, who tho' he neither shed, nor has any blood of his own; yet
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may be said to purchase his Church with his own blood, inasmuch as he purchased it with Christ's blood, for God the Father may call Christ's blood his own blood upon two accounts, 1. by right of possession, in that Christ was his, was his Lamb that was offered to take away the Sins of the World, and 2^{ly} by reason of his relation to him, in that Christ was his own Son, and therefore Christ's blood may be said to be God the Father's own blood.

But to shew the unreasonableness of this forced interpretation, and how differently it makes the Apostle speak from all common and usual ways of speaking (which is argument enough against it) let us apply it to some other instances: the Man that brought an offering to the Lord under the Levitical dispensation, whether of the Herd, or Flock, had certainly a right to call the Bullock or Sheep which he offered his own, but when he laid his hand upon the head of the Sacrifice, and killed the Bullock or Sheep, and let out his blood, could it with any propriety of Speech be said that the Sacrificer had let out his own blood, because the Sacrifice was his own Beast? it might as properly have been said, that he laid his hand upon his own Head, and struck the knife into his own breast, and in short killed himself.

Again, *Abraham* undoubtedly bare that relation to *Isaac*, that he might well call him his own Son and his only Son by the free Woman. Now when God commanded *Abraham* to offer up that Son, if as he intended, and was ready to have done, he had sheathed the Knife in the lads Throat, could it have been said, because *Isaac* was *Abraham's* own Son,

Son, that *Abraham* had cut his own Throat? or because that he had shed the blood of his Son, that he had shed his own blood? no way of speaking will allow this; and yet this is still more unreasonably applied to God and Christ, than to a Man and his Son, because the Son is part of the substance of the Father, and the Father's blood runs in the Son's Veins, but this cannot be said of Christ and God, for God is a Spirit, and has no Body, and blood: in fine, he that redeem'd his Church with his own blood, must be one that had blood of his own to shed; and this we know Christ had and did, who was that great High Priest of ours, distinguished from the High Priest under the Law, in the 9th to the *Heb.* by this remarkable difference, that the High Priest under the Law *entered into the holy place with the blood of others*, v. 25. but Christ v. 12. *entered into the holy place with his own blood, having obtained eternal Redemption for us*, from all which it is plain, that he that redeemed the Church with his own blood is Christ, and he is here expressly said to be God, God by nature, the supreme God.

For that we may not mistake him to be any thing less when he is called God, the Scriptures attribute to him not only the name, but the incommunicable Properties of the Godhead, *Immutability, Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence*, and as by these Attributes he is qualified for, and capable of it, so they appoint divine Honour and Worship to be given to him: in his name we are baptized, in him we are to believe, to him we must direct our Prayers, and offer up our Praises and Thanksgivings, and in a word, him must all Men honour.

*as they do the Father, but God had declar'd by the Prophet Isaiah, that he will not give his Glory to another, and therefore since by his appointment, his Glory is to be given to the Son, it must follow, that the Son is not another, but the same God with himself: if he were not, the Gospel by enjoining Religious Worship to be paid him, would be the most contradictory Institution that ever appear'd in the World, for one great design of it, was to root out that Idolatry, which had in a great measure overspread the World, but if Christ be not God, God by Nature, the Gospel is so far from destroying Idolatry, that it has given a new occasion for it, by proposing another object of it; for the Idolatry which St. Paul charges the Galatians with, before their conversion to Christianity was, that they served those that were not Gods by Nature; if therefore Christ be not God by Nature, the Gospel by commanding us to give religious Worship to him, contradicts it self, and engages us into an Idolatrous Practice; but the Gospel is safe enough from any such imputation, and we from any such guilt, if we will take St. John's word, who assures us, that the Son is the true God, and that in opposition to Idols, in the conclusion of this Epistle, *We are in him, says he, that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ, this is the true God and eternal Life — Keep your selves from Idols.**

I have been the longer upon this point, because it has ever been lookt upon as one of the most fundamental Articles of the Christian Religion, taught in the Scriptures, received and asserted, by the Fathers that lived before the Council of Nice as well as those since, 'tis the great Encouragement

ragement and Life of our hope, the only Foundation of our Faith in Christ, and ground of our invocation of him, who were not a proper object of either if he were not God: to conclude this head, if its being taught in plain and express Scripture, in its Native and Unforced Meaning, if its being received by all the faithful from the Apostles times, if its being professed and defended by the Fathers, asserted in Synods and Councils, which have denounced *Anathemas* against the Opposers of it; if these may convince us, that the Divinity of the Son of God, is a necessary Article of the Christian Religion, then I may venture to say, that a denyer of this Article and a Christian are more truly a contradiction, than any that are pretended in the doctrine of the Three Persons in one Essence, or of two Natures in one Person: which brings me from the consideration of the Character, or Stile of our Saviour, which was my first general, to speak very briefly to his manifestation which is my second.

The Son of God was manifested (i. e.) he took our Nature upon him, and in that Nature appear'd in the World, Conversed and Preached, Suffered and Dyed; he took our whole Nature, a true Soul and Body, with our natural, tho' not sinful, infirmities, He was Born, He Grew and increased in Wisdom and Stature, He Hungred and Thirsted, He Eat, He Drank, He Slept, He did Reason and Discourse, He was Glad, He Grieved, He Wept, in a word he was made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted; this St. *John* expresseth in other words in his Gospel, Chap. I. *the word*, the known

title of the *Messias* among the Jews, *was made flesh and dwelt among us*, not made flesh by any substantial Change, but the Son of God, who had a divine nature from all Eternity, did in time take a humane Nature, which never subsisted by it self, into a personal Union with the divine; and both these natures remain without change or confusion, in the one Person of Christ, who is both God and Man, God by Eternal Ineffable Generation, and Man as born in time of his Mother: this is indeed a great mystery, and our reason knows not how to account for it; but it is what God has revealed, and therefore to be received by our Faith without hesitancy. St. Paul as it were to prepare us for so astonishing a Doctrine, and to arm us against a surprise, prefaces it with these words, *without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness, God was manifested in the Flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, Preach'd unto the Gentiles, believed on in the World, received up into Glory*, all and each of which particulars are so exactly and literally, verified of Christ, who was *God manifest in the Flesh*, who being God appeared in our flesh, and was found in Fashion as a Man, *was justified in the Spirit*, declared to be the true *Messiah*, by the Spirits descending visibly upon him at his Baptism, and by the Miracles which through the Spirit he afterwards wrought, *who was seen of Angels*, in the Wilderness in his agony, at his Resurrection and Ascension, *was Preach'd unto the Gentiles*, by St. Peter to Cornelius and his Family, by St. Paul and the rest of his Apostles, among other of the Heathens: *was believed on in the World*, as it is written *many believed on him*, and

and converts were added daily unto the Church; was received up into Glory at his Ascension, when he was taken up into Heaven, to sit on the right hand of God; that one would wonder how 'twere possible for any to apply them to any other.

But this Scripture, if taken in the plain and Natural Sense of the words, does too clearly assert the Catholick Doctrine, concerning the Son of God, and therefore some forced interpretation must be found out, to apply it to God the Father; but how can God the Father be said to be manifest in Flesh, or received up into Glory? Why, the *Socinians* tell us, that God the Father, (*i. e.*) the will of God the Father, was manifest in Flesh, (*i. e.*) declared or made known by Christ and his Apostles, who were flesh; and God the Father (*i. e.*) the will of God the Father, was received up into Glory, (*i. e.*) was received gloriously here below; by this most unnatural Exposition, the very repetition whereof sufficiently exposes it, and as vain an attempt from some versions to shut out the word God, against the Authority of the Originals that have it, they endeavour to elude the force of this Scripture, and indeed they deal no otherwise with this than with other parts of those Sacred Volumes: they have so ingrossed reason to themselves, as their Predecessors the *Gnosticks* had all Knowledge, that they seem not to allow any to Christ and his Apostles, but to divest him of his Humanity as well as Divinity, and to make him and them speak as never Man spake; they put their Words and writings upon the Wrack,

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to make them own Senses which the Holy Ghost never intended : they do upon slight , or no grounds, suppose defects or redundancies in them, and then arbitrarily add to, or take from them, as best suits their purposes : but *their folly* as to this having been made *so manifest* by a late great Bishop of our Church, as 'twill be very difficult for any but themselves to make it more so, it is to be hoped *they will proceed no farther.*

I have done with the two parts of my Text, our Saviour's Character, and his Manifestation: shew'd in what Notion he is the *Son of God*, and what is meant by his being Manifested,

I proceed to apply the whole, by way of practical Inference:

1. And here from the consideration of his high Character, as He is the Son of God, I shall infer his great condescension in undertaking the merciful work of our Redemption, and the Obligations He has by his Example laid upon all however raised above the common level, to all the lowest Acts of Mercy and Charity, to any of their poorest Brethren, which their wants require, and their own circumstances, will give them leave to perform; for what Objections can be made against any person, or any instance of Kindness to him, which is not answered in this amazing *Condescension*, of the great God to poor Mortals? what difference as to the greatness of Birth, the improvements of the Soul, the dignity of place, the largeness of Estate, and all other advantages in this World? What difference as to the goods of Body, Mind, or Fortune, can make that distance betwixt the greatest Man and the meanest, as is betwixt God and

and the greatest Man? What terms of Enmity can any Person be upon with another, what Injury can he have met with, however real and greatly aggravated, comparable to those provoking Affronts, which God had received from Man? and what humble Offices can any Man's Necessities put another upon? What Stoops can he make to lift his Brother out of the Mire, which he that was God has not set him a pattern of, nay, has not humbled himself more, and Stooped lower for the sake of Man, than one Man is capable of doing for another? If then he who himself *thought it no robbery*, whatever the *Socinians* think of it, *to be equal with God*, if he has overlookt the distance between the Potter and the Clay, the thing framed, and him that formed it, the mighty Creator, and the work of his hands, if he has overlookt the provocations and injuries his poor Creatures had offered him, if he in compassion to their wants and miseries, that he might relieve and succour them, has laid aside or veil'd his Glory, clothed himself with the rags of our Flesh, and appear'd *in the form of a Servant*; shall we stand upon the distance that is betwixt us and our poor Brethren? Shall we remember Abuses, and retain Unkindnesses? Shall we think our selves too much above them, or any offices of Charity, too much below us to stoop to for their good? Has the great God emptied himself, and shall a poor bubble swell with Pride, and look Big? is he not *ashamed to call us Brethren*, and shall we look above those that partake of the same common Nature with us, and whom our Lord esteems as highly, and thought as valuable a price for his suffering and Blood, as our selves?

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has our Master freely remitted us Talents, and shall we barbarously take our fellow servants by the Throat for a few pence? did he *who was rich, for our sakes become poor*, leave the glory which he had before the foundation of the World, and come down to be despised and rejected here, and after this can we refuse any thing for the good of our Brethren? The Son of God, Christ has set us an *example that we should follow his steps*, who was humble, and of a lowly mind, who came rather to minister, than to be ministred unto, If says he to his Disciples after he had washed their feet, *I your Lord and Master have washed your feet, you ought also to wash one anothers feet, for I have given you an example*: I have now instructed you by what I have done to you, how you ought to behave your selves to others, how you ought to minister in all the meanest Offices of Charity to others, tho' inferior to you, as you are to me.

2. From the *manifestation of the Son of God*, (*i. e.*) his taking our humane Nature upon him, how can we but infer the high Honour done to our Nature, and the Engagements thereby laid upon us, to be very careful not to do any thing beneath or unworthy of that Dignity, to which it is advanced? we see how a principle of this kind, the consideration that they are raised above the common Level either by Birth, Alliance, or Character, is apt to lay a great restraint upon some Persons behaviour, upon whom considerations that ought to be of greater weight have but little force: they will pay a respect to their honour, tho' it may be not to their Conscience, and however the Christian be little regarded, they

they will be ashamed of any action unbecoming the Gentleman: I would not be mistaken, I am not against any Mans having a due regard to his Quality, and Character, I wish they were more generally considered by such as are distinguished by them, but that which I hint this for, is that since a Sense of Honour, grounded upon carnal respects and Earthly Relations, has such an influence upon Men, as in a great Measure to keep them from dishonouring those relations, by an unsuitable conduct, surely the consideration that they are descended from Heaven, and nearly allyed to the Divinity, should make them much more careful not to stain such a Birth, and Alliance, with base and dishonourable actions: Will it weigh with me, that I can derive myself, from Ancestors that were but Men, who have transmitted their Blood through many generations to me, that my Family is raised by great and noble Alliances in the World? And is it of no consideration to me, that I am the off-spring of God, that my nature is exalted to the utmost degree of Honour, by the closest Union, a personal Union with the Divine? This methinks should inspire us with a sort of Holy Pride, set us above all little and sordid Practices and make us, reject with Scorn and Indignation, all Temptations to any thing that is low and mean: such a Spirit, such a just Value for our selves, is very consistent with that humble and condescending temper, which I spake of in the last particular, It is no lessening of our selves, to discharge all generous and Charitable Offices to those, who partaking of the same common Nature,

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ture, share likewise in the Advancement of it with us: but it is a great and Scandalous Degradation of our selves, to *serve the Devil and divers Lusts*, to become Slaves to the World, and to our own Passions, which ought to be our Servants: when any of these then assault us, let us reflect how ill it will become us, what a reproach it will be to submit, shall I prostitute that flesh which Christ hath assumed to uncleanness, shall I who am one flesh with him become one with the strange Woman, and make his Members the Member of a Harlot? shall I degrade that rational Nature which He has so highly honoured, into the rank of Beasts, by intemperance? Shall I busie my Soul, which ought to be still Aspiring and Mounting up towards Heaven, whether He is ascended with his, and where are Rivers of refined pleasures for ever, in little Plots, and Contrivances, how to scrape together a little Dirt here below, in Catering for sensual satisfactions, which Beasts share with me in? No my Lord, I will not affront thee so much, as thus to undervalue that Nature, thou hast taken upon thee, I will have another regard for this flesh, since the *Word was made Flesh*, and since thou wert *manifested* and became *in all things like unto us*, I will endeavour to be in all things like unto thee, as far as my Mortal Condition will permit.

3. Lastly, and to conclude, from the conjunction of these two Natures, in the one Person of Christ, we may see how perfectly he was Qualified for the discharge of all those Offices which belonged to him, as the Messias, and this may
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give us the greatest comfort and assurance in the Contemplation of them: as for his propheticall Office by virtue of which he was to teach and instruct us, to lay down precepts and Rules of Life to be observed by all his followers, how well was he qualified for this as he was God? Infinite in Truth, Wisdom, and Power, who therefore cannot impose upon us, in the objects of our Faith, who knows what is fittest for us to do or forbear, who is able to enforce our Observation of all his injunctions: what an Authority does this give to his Doctrine? What a weight to his instructions and precepts? But He was not only to prescribe Laws to us, but likewise to set us an example of Obedience to those Laws in his own practice, for in this sense also He was *to fulfil the Law*, and had He been God only his example would have lost much of that force, it ought to have upon us, to engage us to follow it; for one great use of Examples is to convince us that the thing we are to undertake is feasible, that it has been done already and therefore may be done again: But examples can have this effect only where there is something of a parity and equality, between the Condition and Abilities of those that went before, and those that are to follow, and where there is a great difference between them, especially an infinite disproportion, there they cannot work at all: for how can it convince me that a burthen is not too heavy for Mortal Shoulders, or an undertaking too hard for weak Man, because he that is the Almighty God has born one and has gone through the other? But now since our Lord was Man also, did partake of the same Flesh and

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Blood,

Blood, was incompassed with the same Natural Weakness with our selves; his Example hath its just weight with us in all those Instances, wherein he has propos'd himself a Pattern to be imitated by us, and ought to encourage our Endeavours, by assuring us that there are no Impossibilities required of us, no difficulties in our way to happiness, but what are surmountable by the honest industrious Christian, assisted by that Grace which is ever ready to help all those that sincerely ask for it.

Then for his Priestly Office, in virtue of which he was first to offer himself a Sacrifice for the Sins of the whole World: Now, to make a true and proper propitiatory Sacrifice, there must be the Death of the thing Sacrificed; and *without shedding of Blood, there is no Remission*: He then that would offer himself a Sacrifice, must be one capable of shedding his Blood and Dying; of which, he that is God only, is not capable, being impassible and immortal: But then, that this Sacrifice and Oblation may be a full and perfect Satisfaction to Infinite Justice, for the Sins of all Mankind, it is requisite, that there should be such a Dignity in the Person, as may make his Sufferings of an Infinite Worth and Value, which he that is meer Man cannot pretend to: But now the two Natures, Divine and Humane, being joyned in the one Person of Christ, he was fitted for this great Undertaking. As he was Man, he was in a capacity to suffer, as God, able to satisfy: From his Humane Nature we are assured of the truth and reality, from his Divine of the worth and value of his

his Sufferings: For such is the Union and Communion of the two Natures in the one Person of Christ, that the Properties of each Nature do really agree to, and are truly affirmable of the Person, which soever of the Natures the Person be denominated from; so that tho' the Godhead could not suffer, nor the Divinity die, yet it is very certain that a Divine Person has died, and God shed his Blood for us; and this must render that Blood and Death of an infinite Price, a sufficient Satisfaction to an Infinite Being, and an Equivalent for the Sufferings of all Mankind: And this is an unmoveable foundation for our Faith in his Death, and the Atonement wrought by it, and a ground of strong Consolation to us, that *we were not redeemed with corruptible things, as with Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ, who was God as well as Man.* Then for the other part of his Priestly Office, that of interceding for us, as he is God; he must be a most powerful Advocate, what can he not obtain of his Father, of himself for us? And as Man, *a merciful and faithful High-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for our sins.* His Divinity assures us, that *he is able to succour and save all that come unto God by him;* and his Humanity encourages us to make our applications to him, since *he is not an High-priest that cannot be touched with a feeling of our Infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are,* and therefore we may come *with boldness to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need.*

Lastly,

Lastly, for his Kingly Office, as **God** he is certainly able to govern and protect **his** Subjects, and subdue his and their Enemies, what policy or force of Earth, or Hell, of Men, or Devils can prevail against God? He can defeat all their Counsels, and break all their power: His **Church** is safe under his Protection, and may defie the Gates of **Hell**; his Sheep can fear no evil while he is with them, his *Father is greater than all*; and since *he and his Father are one*, he must be greater than all too, and *none shall be able to pluck them out of his hands*.

What a mighty Confidence and Security must this give his Mystical Body, and all the Members of it in all difficulties and dangers, that they have such an Head to take care of and defend them, who, whatsoever Persecutions threatens them, is able to deliver them out of them, and will do so when it is not more for their advantage to be exercised with them, to be purified and reformed by them? The Devil, the World, and the Flesh conjoyned, are a powerful and formidable Combination against us; but *little Children ye are of God, and shall overcome them for greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the World*; even Death the last Enemy shall be destroyed by him; when the Pains of Death shall get hold of us, and the Sorrows of the Grave encompass us, we are then Prisoners of hope, our King who has conquered Death, and triumphed over the Grave, will not suffer them to detain us long, but will call Death to an account, and the Grave to a restitution of every Atom committed to it, and will raise again our
Bodies,

Bodies, and unite them to their proper Souls : But this Resurrection of our Bodies, and re-union of them to their Souls, is in order to a general Judgment which is to settle the eternal Condition of all Mankind, when this Almighty King comes to take an account of their Behaviour, and to reward or punish all his Subjects according to their deserts : But *who may abide the Day of his coming*, or who may stand when he appeareth? A terrible Day indeed to all those his Enemies that would not have this King to reign over them, whom he shall *punish with everlasting Destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power* : Yea, even his most faithful Subjects, if they reflect upon themselves and their Performances, the many slips and failings they have been guilty of, the many imperfections that have attended their best Services, and if they consider him only as an Almighty and Just Judge, will have reason to cry out, *Enter not into Judgment with thy Servants, O Lord, for if thou shouldst be extream to mark what is done amiss, who may abide it?* But then here is their comfort, that the *Son of God*, who is to be their Judge, is the *Son of Man* too, and therefore the *Judgment is committed to him, because he is the Son of Man*, and then they may reasonably hope, that he who is Man, and has been tempted as they are, and knows the frailty of their Condition, will not deal with them according to the strict rigour of Justice, but will make all equitable and merciful Allowances, for the weakness of their Natures, the power of Temptation, and the Difficulties of their respective Circumstances, will graciously

ciously overlook those faults, which have been committed through Surprise, Ignorance, or Infir-
mity, and put a favourable construction upon those
Services which were performed in sincerity, tho'
with much Weakness.

Thus we ought to rejoyce in our King, who, as
God, is a powerful King, to rule and defend us,
and conquer our Enemies; and as Man, a compas-
sionate and merciful Judge, to try and pass Sen-
tence upon us; thus was he fitted by the conjun-
ction of two Natures, Divine and Humane in one
Person, to be a Prince and Saviour; thus was he
perfectly qualified for the discharge of the Office of
the *Messiah*, who being the Eternal Son of God, was
as on this Day manifested in the Flesh.

To whom with the Father, &c.

F I N I S.

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